

**SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN ~ MAY 22, 2022**  
**“DON’T FORGET GOD”**  
**John 4:5-42**

**By Archpriest Peter Olsen**  
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In today’s Gospel, we listened to an unusual conversation between our Savior and a woman of Samaria. Most likely they were both speaking Aramaic, but when we listen to their conversation, it seems as if they are each speaking in a different language. The woman does not correctly understand the intention and meaning of Jesus’ words. In a sense they *are* speaking two different languages. Later, when the apostles reappear, this strange dialogue continues between our Savior and His disciples, as if the apostles are picking up from where the Samaritan woman left off. Our Savior’s mind, and therefore, His words, are always occupied with the spiritual world. If you think about it, is there ever a time anywhere in the Gospel when our Savior, while physically here on this earth, is not occupied with the spiritual world; with God? The woman has come to the well to draw water. The disciples had gone out to buy food. What they are doing is not wrong or a sin. We all have to take care of these and many other things that occupy our time. The sin, however, is that they have forgotten God. In Deuteronomy 6:4-12 we read:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words, which I command you this day, shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and on your gates. And when the Lord your God brings you into the land which he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you, with great and excellent cities, which you did not build, and houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, and cisterns hewn out, which you did not yew, and vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant, and when you eat and are full, then take heed lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

I think that this warning from Moses to the ancient Israelites makes it very clear that we are expected to never forget God. Forgetting about God leads to our destruction and downfall. Why do we forget God? There are many reasons. Verses 4-9 in the quote above has become the most essential prayer in all of Judaism, namely, the Shema. The injunction of the Shema in a few words is to love God above all things. The world is a big distraction and Satan knows that, so he dangles the charms of the earth before our eyes hoping we’ll eventually forget all about our souls. If we allow the glitter of the world to hold the first place in our hearts, then we will forget about God. The first words of John the Baptist, as well as the first words of Jesus when He began His ministry, were: “Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” When we choose not to struggle against sin and repent, then we will shun God, the Church, and anything else that will make us feel guilty about our sin ~ then we will forget about God. Many of us live as if our lives on this earth were going to last forever. We forget that one day life as we know it on this earth will come to an end. Then there will be a Judgment Day and we will have to give an accounting to the Lord for our entire lives. When we forget that we are mortal and that one day we will die, then we forget about God.

Jesus spoke about *living water* that quenches our thirst forever, and food, if partaken of, will result in our never feeling hungry again. Jesus is not speaking about the water in the well or the food that the apostles purchased. The water and food that the Lord is offering the woman and the apostles is *spiritual* nourishment, the Word of God, the words of eternal life. These

sacred words teach us what we must do and how we should live our lives, what our vision and world view should be, how we can achieve peace in our souls, in a word, how we can be saved. All human beings are thirsting and hungering for spiritual nourishment. Many do not know where to find this nourishment and fill this huge, essential gap in their lives. Satan works very hard night and day to keep these people from finding the Lord, our Savior Jesus Christ. Our Savior tells the Samaritan woman that God is worshipped “in spirit and in truth.” The Devil does the opposite. The Devil draws us away from the spirit and tempts us with carnal material things. Instead of the truth of Christ the Devil sows lies in our hearts. All of us make critical decisions in life every day. Often, we make those decisions based on what’s popular or what other people are going to think or say about them or what we feel like doing. We are always making plans from one day to the next. We are always making choices and choosing our behavior. Let us never forget God. Let us flee as if from fire any of the temptations or pitfalls that can cause us to forget God. Let us always pray and consult God and remember His Holy Word in everything we say and do. Let God hold the first place in our hearts always, today, tomorrow, now and forever, all the days of our lives. Amen!

